

SHORT NOTES

Response of Cook's and Black Petrels to artificial sounds

I tested the response of Cook's Petrels (*Pterodroma cookii*) and Black Petrels (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) to the "war-whoop" method (Warham 1988a, Tennyson & Taylor, this issue) during the 1988-89 breeding season on Great Barrier Island. Cook's Petrels lay between late October and early December in northern New Zealand; most chicks hatch at the end of December; chicks depart in late March and early April (Imber 1985). Black Petrels lay mainly during November and December; most chicks hatch in late January and February, and all depart between April and July (Imber 1987).

On 14 December 1988, distant Cook's Petrels in flight were attracted to my calls and circled overhead. The amount of calling from the birds increased markedly. However, only one bird came to ground, after hitting a tree. Further war-whoop tests until late January produced a similar level of response but no birds were landed. My calls on 6 February and 12 March produced almost no effect.

Therefore, Cook's Petrels do respond to war-whoops but not as strongly as some other *Pterodroma* species do. They also show a seasonal response, as Tennyson & Taylor have shown with the Grey-faced Petrel.

Black Petrels did not respond to war-whoops. However, single birds were found at night beside running power generators on four occasions between October and December 1988 at Port Fitzroy. Although on Great Barrier Island Black Petrels nest only above 300 m (unpubl.), the generators that the birds were beside were all below 100 m. Warham (1969) reported that several of the congeneric Grey Petrel (*P. cinerea*) were attracted to a running generator on Macquarie Island between March and July. Grey Petrels used to breed on Macquarie but no longer do so (Jones 1980).

As Black Petrels lay in November-December and Grey Petrels lay in March-June (Imber 1983), both species were attracted to generators during the first half of the breeding season. The birds were probably attracted because the generator noise resembles the clack call of the Black Petrel and the rattle call of the Grey Petrel (Brooke 1986, Imber 1987, Warham 1988b). The clack call of the Black Petrel is used for sexual advertisement (unpubl.). Therefore, the birds attracted to generators may be unpaired birds looking for mates.

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The status of Cook's Petrel on Great Barrier Island

Only four burrows of Cook's Petrel (*Pterodroma cookii*) were found in the Mount Hobson area on Great Barrier Island during the 1987-88 and 1988-89 breeding seasons. I searched widely for burrows, especially in areas over 300 m asl, finding no Cook's Petrel burrows above 400 m and no evidence of successful breeding. I found the remains of 16 cat-killed Cook's Petrels between 200 m and the summit on major tracks, but none were fledglings. Birds of unknown breeding status actively display and call over much of the island between October and March.

The past status of Cook's Petrels on Great Barrier Island is uncertain. Imber (1979) found a cat-killed fledgling near a burrow at about 300 m asl. This is the best evidence that the species successfully breeds on Great Barrier Island. Hutton (1868) first reported Cook's Petrels as very common on Great Barrier but did not mention breeding. Other records summarised by Bartle (1967) and Bell (1976) are only of cat-killed birds and of birds calling overhead. However, Harper (*in* Bell 1976) reported seven juveniles on the summit (621 m) in April 1974, which he thought had emerged from nearby burrows. Considering other recent sightings, it is questionable whether these birds were aged correctly. Overall, the level of activity on the island seems unchanged since 1966 (Bartle 1967).

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